2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the tailors are to be seen making *ǧalālīb* (long blouses; singular, *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy promiscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore connected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a man in another village in the same province. She then told him the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year.

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

or village.[1] Doubtless, too, the ancient craftsmen were to be seen at work in the open shops as are their descendants to-day; and here it is to be noted that a support, somewhat resembling that upon which the modern coppersmith rests his vessel in order to hammer it into shape (p. 32), is depicted in numerous New Kingdom paintings of metal-workers plying their tasks [2] (Fig. 155).

I have spoken (p. 23) of the light-heartedness of the modern Egyptians. This, as my brother has pointed out to me, was an

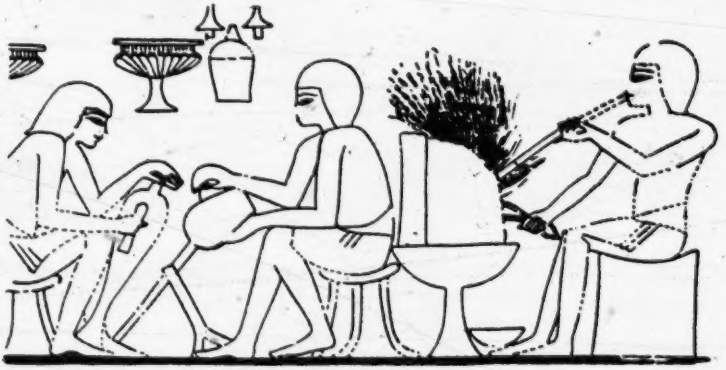

FIG. 155. ANCIENT METAL-WORKERS
After Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes*, Pl. XI.

outstanding trait in the character of the ancient Egyptians, as is well exemplified not only in their literature,[3] but in the paintings and sculptures which adorn the tomb-chapels of the wealthy, and which depict feasting, sport,[4] pastimes, and daily life in general. The Egyptians devoted all this labour and expenditure to the construction and decoration of their Houses of Eternity not because they were always morbidly brooding over death, but because they hated death and loved life and all that life stands for.[5]

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[2] *E.g.* W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pls. 36, 59*a*, 228, 241, 242, 317.
[3] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, translated by A. M. Blackman (London, 1927), especially pp. 36 ff., 133, 242 ff., 251 ff.; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, translated by A. M. Blackman (Oxford, 1927), p. 29.
[4] *Cf.* A. H. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. ix, pp. 9, 12 and note 4, 15 and note 9; A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 122, 125.
[5] On this subject see especially A. H. Gardiner, "Life and Death (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. viii, pp. 19 ff.

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shåban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

---

(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]